

REMARKS

Claims 6-11 are in the application. The claims have been rejected under Section 103 based on Genovese (U.S. 5,811,059) in view of Mueller (DE 10105728). Generally the rejection proposes substituting the ion mobility spectrometry (IMS) system of Genovese with applicants' recited mass spectrometer. It should be noted, however, that the prior art uses the IMS in conjunction with a detector (e.g., a mass spectrometer or an infrared spectrometer) to first detect a compound of interest and then to only send a samples of compounds of interest to the IMS. This has the effect of providing limited samples to the IMS, e.g., only when a known compound of interest is identified. See col. 3, line 49 - col. 4, line 11 of Genovese. This arrangement is different from and inconsistent with the invention as now defined in each of the independent claims 6, 10 and 11. By way of example, claim 6 requires a detector which outputs

"a peak corresponding to every detected group of material separately passing through the separation device ..."

This feature enables introduction of all detected groups of material into the mass spectrometer through an inlet valve and otherwise controlling flow of the carrier gas into the alternate outlet instead of the mass spectrometer. None of the prior art is concerned with preventing unnecessary carrier gas from entering a mass spectrometer and certainly none of the prior art suggests the claimed arrangement. Nor is there any motivation for combining the references that would render the claimed invention obvious. This is because there is no reason that one would control flow through the inlet valve and alternate outlet as described in claim 6 when the arrangement uses an IMS instead of a mass spectrometer. Further, one embodiment of Genovese (see col. 3, line 49 ff) incorporates a mass spectrometer in addition to an IMS but yet does not at all disclose any awareness of the problems or the solutions which applicants have addressed, e.g., avoiding presence of carrier gas in the mass spectrometer.

The amendments to independent claims 10 and 11 provide similar distinctions over the prior art. It is therefore submitted that all of the claims are allowable.

Conclusion

Allowance of the application is requested in view of the above amendments and the distinctions now of record. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any appropriate fees due in connection with this paper, including the fees specified in 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 (c), 1.17(a)(1) and 1.20(d), or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 19-2179.

Respectfully submitted,

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